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CONTENTS

Correspondence	174
Village and City—Root and Fruit	175
Technology for Small Community Services, by Frank W. Cyr	177
A City Turns to Small Schools	178
Physician and Community	179
Reviews	
<i>The Study of Human Nature</i> , by David Lindsay Watson	180
Index to Volumes X and XI of <i>Community Service News</i> (January, 1952, to December, 1953)	183

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CORRESPONDENCE

I think the Sept.-Oct. issue is a most thought-provoking document and I was very interested to read it. I taught in southern Ohio for one year—and in rural W. Va. too, so I do appreciate something of the problem discussed. The whole matter of consolidation gives rise to much controversy. I think there are definite values to be considered on both sides of the issue, and it is easy to line these up but difficult to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

We face the same problem in thinking of the consolidation of our churches. There are 800 Baptist churches in W. Va., many of them one-room, inadequate buildings to which most ministers do not care to go. Yet they are at the grass roots of the communities in which they exist and they are dear to the hearts of the folk even though the programs they offer do not in any way meet the high ideals we hold for the church as we see it. So the problem in both the instance of church and school looms great. Should we risk the loss of community spirit and need for the sake of modern trends? Is it necessary that local concerns be lost because of consolidation? I think it is quite a case, and I wish the answer were more obvious. I shall be interested to know what develops as a result of the study you folks are conducting.

—Grace Turley, Parkersburg, W. Va.

The Sept.-Oct. issue of *Community Service News* is especially interesting to me. For years I have felt that the values of consolidation were greatly exaggerated and that the size of schools should be more carefully considered in relationship to local conditions, needs and opportunities.

—Elizabeth F. Haswell
Dayton, Ohio

Having long since been aware of the problems which arise from school consolidation, it was with great interest that I read and then re-read your quotations from Judge Meyer and Wm. McKinley Robinson. I am the editor of a small paper, "The Friends of the Schools News." It is the official medium of a group called "The Friends of the Minnesota Schools," organized about three years ago to study the problems arising from the school reorganization law and school consolidation here in Minnesota. We have tried to point out to our members and to all those who ask information from us that these problems are not merely local, but nationwide in scope.

—Mrs. Paul Schouweiler
Kellogg, Minnesota

[*The Friends of the School News* reprinted two articles from the preceding issue of *C. S. News*.]

Community Service News, issued bimonthly except July and August by Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, Ohio. \$2.00 per year, two years \$3.00. Griscom Morgan, editor.

Community Service, Inc., is an organization to promote the interests of the community as a basic social institution, concerned with the economic, recreational, educational, cultural and spiritual development of its members. Community Service was incorporated in 1940 as a non-profit organization to supply information and service for small communities and their leaders, in the belief that the decay of the American community constitutes a crisis which calls for steady and creative effort. The nation-wide interest expressed during the succeeding years has reinforced this opinion.

VILLAGE AND CITY: ROOT AND FRUIT

When we say that man is by his origin and by his nature a villager we state more than an historical fact. Psychologically and socially men are by nature village creatures. A very considerable number of the stresses of modern human life, including modern war, bad government, economic exploitation and psychopathic stresses, are the outcome of departures from village life. No small part of the efforts men make to cure these evils take the form of creating substitutes for the intimate village life which has been left behind.

To draw attention to the fact that most of human life has been spent in villages and that men are socially and psychologically adjusted to live best in small groups does not deny that cities have been a controlling element in human progress, or that they will continue to be of similar importance as the places where civilization comes to a head and displays its achievements. But so obvious is the display of the city that it tends to withdraw attention from the conditions making its achievement possible.

Breeders of apple trees have been giving practically all their attention until recently to the best strains of fruit. Now they are discovering that there is as much difference in root systems as in fruit. Some varieties have roots that are extremely vigorous in gathering food from the soil, in resisting drouth and disease, and in supporting large crops. Other varieties have root systems that are weak in all these characteristics. It is necessary to breed good varieties of seedling roots on which to graft the good fruit trees.

Throughout most of human history the small community has been the root of human culture, from which the cities had to get their strength. It is in the small community that the qualities of personality and character develop which determine the motivation of government, of business, and of social life. The underlying culture of the small community becomes the underlying culture of the nation. Striking evidence of this is revealed in a recent survey:

Out of 63 college presidents who answered the questionnaires, 53 are rural born, as were 41 senators out of 58, and 35 of our present governors. It has been estimated that 80 percent of the ministry, 75-80 percent of the successful business and professional men of our cities, and 85 percent of those listed in "Who's Who in America" have come from rural communities. All but three of the presidents of the United States were rural born.

(Rural Education News, September 1953.)

Yet, in the consideration of American social problems the small community is overlooked. There is abundant literature on problems of the city and

on the problems of the cities' food supplier, the farm; but the problems of the small community have been largely passed by. Specialists in health, education, government, economics and religion generally regard the bonds and associations of local communities as nuisances and obstacles to their urban-style plans of organization and operation, and rarely regard the community itself as a basic unit of health, education, government, religion and economic life. It is objected that the small community is too small to serve as a unit.

An interesting example of this outlook is contained in a report by a leading rural sociologist who helped in a program for centralizing health facilities. He was surprised at hearing a head public health nurse say, "My greatest problem is school consolidation. . . . Our better-baby program goes along very nicely in the district school where the mothers are acquainted, but it is very difficult to organize this program as the neighborhood school disappears in an area being consolidated."

"Here," disapproves this rural sociologist, "we have the medical profession, demanding units of sufficient size to provide a certain standard of service, but a representative of this group failed to appreciate that the same principles might apply in the case of education." The sociologist followed this criticism with recognition that neighborliness is indeed sacrificed, but that "the trend toward bureaucracy is an irresistible urge of the age, with which it is better to cooperate than to fight. It is, however, the better part of wisdom to know that any cooperation requires sacrifice, a fact that many educators who are enthusiastic supporters of consolidation fail to appreciate."

This recognition of the price to be paid for consolidation of what had been community functions is as valuable as it is courageous, but the assumption that small community values need to be sacrificed is a basic issue before modern civilization.

Just as nurserymen once assumed that the trend toward grafting excellent fruit characteristics onto seedlings meant disregard for quality of seedling stock, so it is assumed that professional bureaucracy, large-city ways and large-scale efficiency means decline in the integrity of small-community relationships. Such values are not mutually exclusive, but mutually interdependent, and it is going to be one of the most important studies before mankind to find how these values may be brought into effective relation to each other.

As an example of newer views reconciling these values, we reproduce the following statement by Frank Cyr, of Teachers College, Columbia University, from the chapter on "Education" in *Farmers of the Future*, a report of the Columbia University Seminar on Rural Life. This and the succeeding articles are representative of many new developments that could be included if space permitted.

TECHNOLOGY FOR SMALL COMMUNITY SERVICES

by Frank W. Cyr

Educational technology in rural areas is at about the stage industrial technology had reached at the turn of the century. The small schools in small communities serving small groups are depending primarily on methods of teaching that blindly imitate the teaching methods of larger schools—teaching methods developed to meet individual needs through mass education. Such imitation inevitably means that the smaller the school, the poorer the scope and quality of the education provided.

Fifty years ago it was a fact accepted by all, including the designers of trains, that large groups going in the same direction at the same time were essential to any adequate provision for good transportation. Yet in the past fifty years, automotive engineers, using new principles and methods of developing and applying power, have through the use of motor vehicles opened a whole new realm of transportation of high quality which effectively serves the transportation needs of small groups and individuals. . . .

The same creative approach and the same willingness to pioneer new methods which produced the automobile are needed to produce the small school capable of assuming the responsibilities for providing an adequate curriculum. This will require new approaches to the processes of teaching and to the administrative organization of the school district. . . .

In small schools a small class interested and competent in a subject can pursue it on its own initiative, with the teacher acting as counselor and guide in the learning process. Grouping children of different ages but like interests, providing them with learning materials such as supervised correspondence courses, making it possible for them to help each other learn, using the resources of the community in the learning process, and arranging for circuit teachers and other specialists to serve a group of schools, all offer opportunities of meeting the wide variety of needs among pupils of small schools.

The type of organization provided for the public school should be in harmony with the decentralized pattern through which governmental and other activities of rural community life are carried on. In this pattern groups are relatively small, with individual influence and close personal relationships of greater importance than the machinery of organization. It is vitally more important to keep the local natural sociological community the operating unit for carrying on the work of the school. However, with modern transportation and communication, groups of communities can coordinate their efforts and together, on a county- or area-wide basis, provide educational leadership and special services more efficiently. The purpose of the larger-area operation is to strengthen the local community through federation, not to displace it through centralization of power and functions.

A CITY TURNS TO SMALL SCHOOLS

That the one-room small community school may now be reinvented in a new garb is suggested by the accomplishment of the suburban school system of El Paso, Texas. The following report is abstracted from the October 11, 1953, Columbus (Ohio) Citizen. (Italics as in original article.)

For 275 lucky six- and seven-year-olds in El Paso, going back to school held no terrors this year. They're the first and second graders who go to "cottage schools."

Dr. Mortimer Brown, El Paso's school superintendent, and his assistant, M. R. Hollenshead, came up with the cottage school idea in 1951. The purpose then was only a stop-gap until regular schools could be built in El Paso's fastest growing suburban areas. A school system architect named William G. Wuehrmann drew plans for *two-bedroom houses, omitting only the walls dividing the bedrooms from the living room*. This left 910 square feet of floor space for a classroom. . . .

What are the advantages of cottage schools? *They can be built quickly*. The four El Paso units were built within 90 days of the letting of the contract. *They're comparatively cheap*. Each two-house unit cost approximately \$25,750. Dr. Brown points to the cost per pupil (\$429.15) *compared to \$821.66 in a newly constructed 21-room elementary school*. With a few minor changes the cottage schools can be sold as homes.

They ease the "adjustment" of small children to school life. Children don't feel "institutionalized." It's a much safer environment, too.

They bring parents closer to the school. "Parents can pop over any time they feel like it, informally," says Hollenshead. "They don't feel they have to get dressed up specially just to go to school. They even hold meetings in the buildings at night. We didn't anticipate this result but we're very happy about it. *I don't think we've seen anything in 25 years as successful.*"

The cottage schools fall under principals of the regular elementary schools. Lunches are trucked from the nearest full-size school and heated up in the cottage school kitchens. . . . "It puts teachers on their mettle," says Hollenshead. "It's the best training ground." . . . Mrs. Dolores Hodge, whose 7-year-old daughter, Loreen, goes to a cottage school, says, "I think this kind of setup is much better for small children. There is so much more confusion in the large schools. I know that Loreen is much happier."

The success of the idea has started El Paso school officials rethinking the whole program of elementary education. "*Because of our experience,*" Hollenshead says, "*we are definitely going to aim toward the smaller elementary schools.*" *Three new cottage schools are now under construction.*

PHYSICIAN AND COMMUNITY

No serialized magazine story has carried such suspense for us as the strivings of a New York village and its courageous physician, reported in the "Opus," frequent mailings of mimeographed correspondence of Dr. Nicholas Linderman.

Dr. Linderman left a thriving large-city practice to accept the invitation of a progressive group of citizens of the village of Byron, New York, because he felt the futility of a specialist approach to human needs in a disintegrating society. In Byron Dr. Linderman has sought to see and work with the rural community as an integrated whole, with all services—medicine, public health, education, church, soil conservation—working in a setting of citizenship initiative and responsibility. He has been working out ways for relating local communities and their general practitioners of medicine, education and other services, to the large regional centers and specialists so that local initiative would be kept and strengthened.

Dr. Linderman's philosophy of community work is epitomized in the following quotation from the Opus:

"There are universally constant ingredients of successfully administered programs of community development: First, there must be the visions of individuals—visions which become molded and modified and coalesced and finally accepted as the unified vision of the community-at-large. And then, from the frame of reference of this vision, methodical preparations are made so as to enable the people of the community to avail themselves of privileges and opportunities as they develop."

The following letter to Dr. Linderman by Jay Gould of Fort Wayne, Indiana, is representative of the reaction of many readers:

"The church is hauling at the souls and beliefs of men; the schools stuffing the memories of youth with unrelated 'departmentalized' facts; the 'health' organizations working with disease; the medical profession saving us from death, but not for health; the farmer torturing his soil to produce excess food to keep up with the rising cost of that same produce after it has been processed.

"All working as though there could be complete souls and minds without bodies complete in nerves, organs and glands; as though there could be history without soil or religion or biology; as though there could be grammar and rhetoric without experience and mathematics and beliefs of men.

"Your OPUS is a staggering epic of a brave struggle by a few to correct these dangerous absurdities which are disintegrating the good that our organizations might be accomplishing."

REVIEWS

The Study of Human Nature, by David Lindsay Watson (Yellow Springs, Ohio, The Antioch Press, 1953, 261 pages, \$3.50).

The discoverer of a new tropical fruit published a bulletin in which he undertook to describe its flavor and texture. He recorded its sweetness on a scale of 100 points, its hydrogen-ion concentration (PH), and gave other technically precise information. In a footnote he said it had the texture of a banana, and the flavor of a pineapple. Those two comments alone helped readers to somewhat understand its flavor and texture because they had had direct first-hand experiences with pineapples and bananas. In the absence of such past experience, his technical description could not suggest what the fruit was like.

So it is with the study of human nature. We get a knowledge of it from the direct experience of participation which we could get in no other way. Social science is important in that by statistical inquiry and by quantitative measurements errors of observation and deep-rooted prejudices may be corrected.

Direct experiences of human nature and objective inquiry supplement and correct each other. If either is neglected, our understanding is warped or lessened. It is because conventional social science, in an effort to duplicate the physical sciences in its methods, has tended to ignore direct experience, that this book was written, as a corrective to a prevalent shortcoming.

But it is much more than that. Watson, trained as a physicist, craves to see life whole. This book reflects his struggle and his achievement. He is full of it, and tells his story with fire and insight. All through the book are flashes of wisdom. He begins with an assertion of the importance of the issue:

Knowledge (or ignorance) of human nature is at the core of all social and political organization. It is this that determines what candidate we shall elect, and what measures he will propose. On it, above everything, rests the health and vitality of democratic government. At the hub of all political machinery lies the skill of the people to size up the motives and character of its rulers. If the voter knows men, honest government is possible. If he is stupid or indifferent, the way is open for clever scoundrels, who know our weaknesses, to seize and hold power.

At the heart of all our enterprises, there rests this skill to judge men. But to be effective, this skill must be our very own. It is not enough that before we go to the polls, the plant, the barn, or the office, we consult an "expert." For unless we can size up the integrity and talents of our adviser—whether scientist or friend—then we are no better off than before. . . . We must learn to read human nature *for ourselves*. (p.9)

And again we read:

If we carefully observe an animal engaged in some characteristic activity—a cat climbing, a dog hunting, a bird flying—we must be impressed by the delicacy and accuracy of the practical sense employed. It requires, however, some effort of imagination to realize that such skill is *knowledge*, knowledge of the real world and of the animal's relation to that world. This is science no less than physics or psychiatry, in that it confers the ability to use the environment meaningfully and successfully—which is the object of science. However, the bird or the dog cannot tell us what he knows. And if we endeavor to put into words or symbols the habits and principles involved in flying, it is evident that our description would be vastly inferior in effectiveness to the subtle organization in the nervous system of the bird.

Under the influence of the scientific tradition, we have come to regard such un verbalized, unsystematized practical skill as "unscientific." . . . There are many matters in regard to which something akin to the mute, seemingly automatic "horse sense" of the dog is the only valid kind of knowledge we have.

We students of man will continue to waste our breath, and to miss the point, until we have clearly recognized the existence and importance of this unsymbolized knowledge—which never has got, and never can get, into the pages of the scientific journals. (pp. 15-16)

Again we read:

First-hand experience is the primary source of valid representations of human nature. . . . No knowledge of men is to be regarded as other than tentative or visionary, unless it has been used to *do* things to, with, or by means of men, or their social organizations. Unless there has been a give-and-take between the participant (or truth-seeker) and the men he is studying, an interchange in which he does significant things, either to, or with, them (or they to, or with, him) little of moment will be learned. [Watson gives striking illustrations of this fact.] (p. 42)

The chief source of insight into human nature is then our way of life, and the more important knowledge of men is that which arises naturally from interaction with our fellows. (p. 53)

The degree of a man's unstudied insight into his fellows has no relation to his "scientific" training or achievements. (p. 61)

Christ was right, and when he said "love thy neighbor as thyself," he taught what is most lacking in the "science" of those psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists who imagine that, by "accuracy" and "objectivity," they can dispense with the moral-spiritual component, and evade this tough assignment. Only he who is willing to *give* something of himself can cross the metaphysical barriers into another's life. (p. 103)

It is characteristically those who have limited first-hand experience with life who are ready to trust their fate to panaceas, such as a world govern-

ment elected by individuals. Watson pungently remarks, "The privilege of pushing others around will always betray the holder of power. A world state would simply make this danger more insidious."

A few other phrases will give a hint of what one will find in this unconventional book:

It is as part *creator* of his universe, that man is most peculiarly human. And the "science" of man which fails to inspire these strange creative powers, can only lead him further astray. (p. 233)

Truth is often attained with the aid of components of the human endowment whose value the scientist persistently underestimates. (p. 233)

Each specialized field of social science stakes off from the empire of the human comedy, a limited private province. . . . 'The remainder of life is treated superficially, with the imperfect categories of thought derived from one profession.' . . . Joint symposia, hyphenated sciences, the reorienting of study or research around integrating topics—none of these touch the core of the matter. We need men and women who have, in person, sought balance and catholicity in their awareness and activity: who have declined—when necessary—to sell out to the false "security" of status or salary, who have taken the vault of heaven for their roof, and have begun the refusion of our fragmented culture in the hard battle of their daily choices and pangs. (pp. 219-220)

What has all this to do with community? One cannot think deeply or truly or scientifically about life that is a stranger to him. The intimate, varied and complex interrelations of life in primary, face-to-face community give a first-hand knowledge of life that is an excellent basis for critical inquiry and for sound judgment. For most members of a face-to-face community such living provides fuller first-hand knowledge of human nature than do the specialized and partial worlds of metropolitan life. It is generally conceded that one of the most masterful achievements on this hemisphere was the drafting of our national constitution. It was the work of men who knew human nature by first-hand intimate daily contact. Such kind of living Watson sees as necessary equipment for work in the social sciences, and for a study of human nature.

This is a dangerous book. It cannot be taken without the kind of discretion the author advises as a general mental attitude. No matter how deep the conviction of the social scientist, or rather because of his deepest conviction, when he reports to us on his studies we want him to give us the unvarnished truth—not that part of the truth which will support his convictions. The author has stated quite clearly that we need the disinterested integrity which is the ideal of science. We wish he had said this even more forcefully, so as to bring it into better balance with his theme. —A.E.M.

Index, Volumes X and XI of *Community Service News*

(January, 1952, to December, 1953)

This index is in three parts: Part I, Books Reviewed; Part II, Names of Persons, Places, and Organizations; and Part III, General.

References are to volume and page. Major articles and headings are in small capitals. Books listed in Part III are those referred to or quoted from.

Contents of the book, *Industries for Small Communities*, which constituted Nos. 1 and 2 of Vol. XI (Pages 1-108), are not included in this index, except as the entire book is listed under general headings.

PART I. BOOKS REVIEWED

- All Alone*, Claire Huchet Bishop, XI, 137
Are Social Classes in America Becoming More Rigid, Gideon Sjoberg, in *American Sociological Review*, X, 26
College and the Community, The, Baker Brownell, X, 56
Community Council Handbook, Pittsburgh Assn. of Community Councils, X, 31
Community Development in the South, Assn. of Southern Agricultural Workers, X, 60
Cultivation of Community Leaders, The, Wm. W. Biddle, XI, 135
Culture in Crisis: A Study of the Hopi Indians, Laura Thompson, X, 92
Democracy Is You, Richard W. Poston, XI, 135
Desert People, The, A Study of the Papago Indians, Alice Joseph, Rosamond B. Spicer, Jane Chesky, X, 93
Education in the Humane Community, Joseph K. Hart, X, 23
An Experiment in the Prevention of Delinquency, Edwin Powers and Helen Witmer, X, 143
Family, Community and Mental Health: Profiles of Community Action, Hogg Foundation, X, 61
Fifth Annual Report, Program of Community Dynamics, Earlham Coll. Bull., XI, 136
Grundtvig, Hal Koch, X, 126
Recreation Leadership, Walter L. Stone and Charles G. Stone, XI, 136
Recreation magazine, "Dominion Drama Festival," "Children's Museums," and "Workshops for Fellowship," Arthur Katona, X, 30
Residential Colleges: Some Developments in British Adult Education, Guy Hunter, XI, 136
Sample List of Community Welfare Centers and Community Organization Projects, A, United Nations, XI, 116
Selected List of Books, Pamphlets and Periodicals in English on Community Organization and Development, United Nations, XI, 116
Sixth National Conf. on Rural Health, Report of, Paul A. Miller, Geo. F. Bond, X, 27
Social Dynamics: Principles and Cases in Introductory Sociology, Jos. B. Gittler, X, 144
Study of Human Nature, The, David Lindsay Watson, XI, 180
Tribe under Trust: A Study of the Blackfoot Reserve of Alberta, Lucien M. Hanks, Jr., X, 92
Your Community Looks at Itself, A Manual for the Home Town Self-Survey, New South magazine, X, 31
Youth, the Nation's Richest Resource, U.S. Govt., XI, 121

PART II. NAMES OF PERSONS, PLACES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Adult Education Association, X, 94
 Advance Mills, N. Car., XI, 158
 Allee, W. A., X, 36
 Am. Assn. of School Administrators, XI, 145
 Am. Country Life Assn., X, 95, 98
 Am. Medical Assn., X, 27
 Am. Society of Civil Engineers, X, 32
 Anderson, A. H., X, 5
 Arnold, Eberhard C. H., X, 44, 96
 Aryanayakam, Ashadevi, X, 96, 111, 112, 114, 120, 123, 128
 Association of Southern Agricultural Workers, X, 60
 Bader, Ernest, X, 110
 Baylor University, X, 62
 Bean, Morris, X, 96, 111, 119
 Becker, Edwin L., XI, 132
 Bertschi, Gene, X, 8
 Biddle, Wm. W., XI, 135
 Bishop, Claire Huchet, X, 96, 111, 115-118, 119, 121, 122; XI, 137
 Black, John D., XI, 166
 Blackwell, Gordon, X, 102
 Bloomington, Ill., X, 4
 Boimondau Community, XI, 114, 124
 Bond, Geo. F., X, 27

- Bouron Community, XI, 138
 Brinser, Ayers, XI, 166
 Brown, Mortimer, XI, 178
 Brown, P. W., XI, 140
 Brownell, Baker, X, 56, 63
 Bruderhof communities, X, 125
 Bryn Gweled Homesteads, X, 125
 Butterworth, J. E., XI, 117
- Cabot, Richard, X, 143
 Carr, Clarence, X, 124
 Catholic Worker, X, 125
 Celo Community, X, 125; XI, 133
 Chapel Hill (N. Car.) Community Council, X, 102
 Chesky, Jane, X, 93
 Chicago, University of, X, 140; XI, 144
 Circle Pines Center, X, 125
 Clinard, Marshall B., X, 137
 Colorado A and M College, X, 30
 Columbia University Seminar on Rural Life, X, 59, 176-7
 Community Adult Education, Univ. of Michigan, X, 102
 Community Development Projects, Ltd. (England), X, 63
 Community Service, Inc., staff, X, 96
 Cook, Robert C., X, 140
 Cooperative Community Builders, X, 44
 Cooperative Community, Inc., X, 125
 Cooperative Homesteads, Inc., X, 125
 Culbreth, Harry W., XI, 123
 Culp, O. S. and Glenn, X, 20
 Curtis, David, X, 125; XI, 134
 Cyr, Frank W., XI, 176-7
- Davis, Dan R., X, 16
 Dawson, Howard A., XI, 117
 Dearmer, Percy, X, 48
 Dobzhansky, Theodosius, X, 86
 Drucker, Peter, X, 26
 Duncan, Hazel Moss, XI, 158
 Duncan, Otis Dudley, X, 140
- El Paso, Texas, XI, 178
 Entente Communautaire, XI, 134
 El Guacio Community, X, 125
 Experimental Group in the Danish Folk School Movement, X, 64; XI, 139
- Farm Foundation, X, 27
 Federighi, Henry, X, 96, 111, 113
 Fellowship of Intentional Communities (formerly "Inter-Community Exchange" and "Federation of Intentional Communities"), X, 44, 64, 121; XI, 134
 Finland, X, 55
 Foster, Gordon, XI, 140, 170
 Friends, Society of, X, 114, 130
- Gandhi, X, 85, 111, 120
 Gantz, Theodore A., XI, 153, 170
 Garwood, John D., X, 139
- Gee, John E., XI, 170
 Gittler, Jos. B., X, 144
 Given, John H., X, 96, 102, 111, 112, 119
 Gould, Jay, XI, 179
 Group Farming Research Inst., X, 96
- Halfert, Elizabeth, X, 102
 Halpin, Andrew Wm., XI, 170
 Hanks, Lucien M., Jr., X, 92
 Hart, Joseph K., X, 23, 37
 Harvard University Press, XI, 166
 Haswell, Elizabeth F., XI, 174
 Heard, Alexander, X, 102
 Hepple, Lawrence, X, 94
 Hidden Springs community, X, 44, 124, 125
 Hindustani Talimi Sangh (Basic Education organization), X, 111
 Hocking County, Ohio, XI, 146
 Hodel, Stan, X, 8
 Hogg Foundation, X, 61
 Hoiberg, Otto G., X, 102
 Hollenshead, M. R., XI, 178
 Hollister, Barrett, X, 96, 111
 Hoy, Russell, XI, 131
 Hughes, Hilda, XI, 140, 170
 Hull, J. H., XI, 153
 Hunter, Guy, XI, 136
 Hutterites, XI, 125
 Huxley, Julian, X, 140
- Illinois towns: Stanford, Colfax, Roanoke, Lexington, Minonk, Eldorado, Cardiff, Gibson City, Towanda, McLean, LeRoy, Eureka, Lincoln, X, 4-14
 Illinois, Univ. of, X, 4
 India, X, 53
 Infield, Henrik, X, 44, 96; XI, 133
 Inter-Community Exchange (Fellowship of Intentional Communities), X, 32, 44
 Internatl. Conf. on Public Education, X, 128
 Internatl. Summer Seminar on Problems and Methods of Technical Assistance in Community Development, Wageningen Agricultural University, Holland, X, 63
 Iowa State College, X, 102
- Jones, Cynthia, X, 102
 Jones, Llewellyn, X, 127
 Jones, W. B., Jr. XI, 140
 Joseph, Alice, X, 93
- Kabir, Humayun, X, 73
 Kansas City, Missouri, 32
 Katona, Arthur, X, 30
 Keene, Paul, X, 125
 Kingwood community, X, 44, 125
 Kirkridge retreat center, X, 125
 Koch, Hal, X, 126
 Koinonia Farm, X, 64, 125
 Kolb, J. H., X, 114
 Konvitz, Milton, X, 74

- LePlay, Frederic, X, 90
 Levittown, X, 138
 Linderman, Nicholas, XI, 179
 Lindstrom, David, X, 132; XI, 165
 Lippmann, Walter, X, 83
 Llano Colony, X, 130
 Loomis, Mildred J., X, 125
 Ludeman, John, XI, 171

 Macedonia Cooperative Community, X, 44,
 96, 125; XI, 110, 140
 Madison College, Tennessee, X, 125
 McClusky, Howard Y., XI, 149
 McGrath, Earl, U.S. Commissioner of Educa-
 tion, X, 128
 McLanahan, Jack, X, 2, 44, 123
 Melbourne Village, X, 125
 Mendel, Gregor, X, 35
 Meyer, Judge Harley, XI, 146
 Mial, Curtis, X, 102
 Michigan State College, X, 27, 132
 Michigan, Univ. of, X, 102; XI, 149
 Miller, Paul A., X, 27
 Miller, Richmond P., X, 130
 Millsap, Walter, X, 130
 Mississippi State Coll., X, 60
 Morgan, Arthur F., X, 3-4, 20, 59, 67, 78, 81,
 82, 92, 111, 119; XI, 111, 145, 170, 172,
 182
 Morgan, Ernest, X, 119
 Morgan, Griscom, XI, 170
 Morrow County, Ohio, XI, 154
 Mt. Morris House, X, 44
 Moyer, Ed, X, 122
 Mumford, Lewis, X, 84

 Natl. Catholic Rural Life Conf., X, 98
 Natl. Commission on School District Reorgan-
 ization, X, 131
 Natl. Education Assn., X, 131, 134; XI, 139
 Natl. Society for the Study of Education,
 XI, 117
 Natl. Training Laboratory in Group Develop-
 ment, X, 63; XI, 139
 Natl. Workshop in Group Organization, XI,
 139
 Navajo Indians, XI, 118
 Nebraska, Univ. of, X, 102
 New York State Citizens' Council, X, 63, 102;
 XI, 139
 Nisbet, Robert A., X, 74
 Norman, Edward, X, 96
 North Carolina, Univ. of, X, 102
 Norton, L. J., X, 4

 Oberlin, John Frederick, XI, 111
 Ofer, Zvi, X, 121
 Ohio Community Schools Assn., XI, 144
 Ohio Farm Bureau, X, 133; XI, 123
 Ohio State Dept. of Education, X, 133; XI,
 143
 Oliver, A. I., XI, 161
 Osborn, Frederick, X, 143
 Oughton, Frederick, XI, 133

 Pacific Ackworth School, X, 39-43, 125
 Pacific Coast Assn. of Friends, X, 40
 Padhi, G., XI, 140
 Paraguay, X, 44
 Pavitt, Leonard, X, 44, 96
 Pekelis, Alexander, X, 74
 Pendle Hill, X, 44
 Penn-Craft Community, X, 125
 Perry, Mr. and Mrs. James, X, 125
 Pestalozzi, X, 47, 52, 73
 Pettinger, W. Norman, X, 72
 Pittsburgh Assn. of Community Councils,
 X, 31
 Planck, Max, X, 35
 "Point Four" program, XI, 115
 Powers, Edwin, X, 143
 Public Admin. Clearing House, XI, 172

 "Quest" community, X, 123, 125

 Ramseyer, John A., XI, 140, 170
 Raper, Arthur F., X, 45
 Rinehart, John, XI, 140, 170, 171
 Robinson, Wm. McKinley, XI, 117, 140, 145,
 168, 170
 Rojankovsky, Feodor, XI, 137
 Royal Commission on Population, X, 140
 Rural Life Assn., X, 63; XI, 172
 Rural Sociological Society, X, 32; XI, 139
 Rural Youth U.S.A., X, 98

 Saline Valley Farms, X, 125
 Sanderson, Dwight, XI, 171
 Schouweiler, Mrs. Paul, XI, 174
 Schultz, Henri, XI, 138
 Seay, Maurice, XI, 144
 Seventh-Day Adventist projects, XI, 124
 Sivaram, M., X, 53
 Sjoberg, Gideon, X, 26
 Skyview Acres, X, 125
 Smiley, A. Keith, Jr., X, 36
 Smith, Tilman, X, 8
 Sociedad pro Comunidad Cooperativa, X, 125
 Society of Brothers, X, 44, 96
 Southern Highlanders, X, 62
 Spicer, Rosamond B., X, 93
 Stacy, W. H., X, 102; XI, 110
 Stoltzfus, Grant M., X, 63
 Stone, Charles G., XI, 136
 Stone, Walter L., XI, 126, 136
 Sutton, D. H., X, 133; XI, 143
 Switzer, Eleanor, XI, 170

 Tanguy Homesteads, X, 44, 125
 Tate, H. Clay, X, 4
 Taylor, Carl C., X, 132
 Texas A and M College, X, 16
 Thaden, J. F., X, 132
 Thompson, Laura, X, 92
 Torrance, Calif., XI, 153
 Tuolumne Cooperative Farm, X, 125
 Turley, Grace, XI, 174

- Ulrich, Ray, X, 8
 U.S. Bureau of Education, X, 133
 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, X, 45
- Wageningen Agricultural University, Holland, X, 63
 Way, John W. and Alice, X, 40-41
 Wellock, Wilfred, X, 54
 Western Michigan College of Education, XI, 117, 145
 Willson, Robert Z., X, 32; XI, 134
- Wilson, H. H., X, 137
 Wisconsin Rural Schools Assn., XI, 144
 Wisconsin, Univ. of, X, 137
 Wiser, Art, X, 96; XI, 110, 140
 Witmer, Helen, X, 143
 Wolff, Max, XI, 110
 Woman's Foundation, X, 61
- Yellow Springs, Ohio, X, 64, 106, 111, 121
 York Center Cooperative Community, X, 125

PART III. GENERAL

- AEd Newsletter*, X, 94
Adult Leadership magazine, X, 94
 Agriculture, X, 20, 59, 61
American City, The, X, 139
Am. Sociological Rev., X, 26, 140
 Amish culture, X, 144
 Andaman Island culture, X, 144
 ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON THE SMALL COMMUNITY
 NINTH, "Integrity and Freedom in Small Communities," X, 64, 96, 111 (summary), 120
 TENTH, "The Lonely Crowd vs. Community," XI, 139, 167
 ARTICLES ON . . . SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS . . . XI, 172
Autonomous Groups Bulletin, X, 74
- Basic Education, X, 120, 123, 128
 BASIC ISSUES IN SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION, XI, 161
 Bloomington, Ill., *Pantagraph*, X, 4
 BOOKS ON BASIC EDUCATION, X, 128
 Buddhism, X, 86
- CELO COMMUNITY ADOPTS LAND HOLDING AGREEMENT, XI, 133
Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin, XI, 132
 CITY TURNS TO SMALL SCHOOLS, A, XI, 178
Collier's magazine, X, 4
 Columbus, Ohio, *Citizen*, XI, 178
Common Room, The, XI, 136
Communaute, organ of the Entente Communautaire, X, 118; XI, 134
 "Communities of work," France, England, etc., X, 110, 115; XI, 114, 124
 Community, adaptation of man to, X, 23, 37, 61
 American Indian, X, 92, 93
 ancient, X, 2, 53, 73, 99
 freedom in the, X, 65, 67, 72, 73, 111
 in India, X, 53, 73
 philosophy of, X, 3, 23, 48, 56, 65, 67, 79, 82, 126; XI, 111, 122, 123, 129, 175
 political parties and, X, 99, 137
 soul of, X, 23
 weaknesses of the small, X, 17, 82
 Community abroad, X, 45, 53, 110, 115, 120; XI, 137
- COMMUNITY AS MEDIATOR, THE, Arthur E. Morgan, X, 3
Community Broadsheet, The, XI, 133
 COMMUNITY-CENTERED SCHOOL, THE, X, 38
 Community centers, X, 8
 Community councils, X, 31, 102; XI, 126
 Community economics, X, 13, 34, 119; XI, 1-108
 COMMUNITY FOR ALL MEANS UNITY WITH ALL, XI, 129
 COMMUNITY HEADQUARTERS, Hazel Moss Duncan, XI, 158
 Community hospitals, X, 27, 29-30
 COMMUNITY MORALE AND SAFETY, XI, 122
 COMMUNITY NEPOTISM, X, 81
 Community services, organization, and planning, X, 31, 102; XI, 116, 126, 135, 177, 179
 programs and methods, X, 4-14, 16-19, 27, 45, 60
 role of the professional in, X, 29, 45
 Community stories, X, 4; XI, 137
 Community surveys, X, 17, 31
 COMMUNITY VERSUS POLITICAL PARTIES, THE, X, 99
 COMMUNITY WIDENS ITS HORIZONS, X, 9
 Consensus, agreement by, X, 99, 130
 CONSTITUTION OF THE YELLOW SPRINGS COMMUNITY COUNCIL, X, 106
 Cooperative communities
 Sec: Experimental communities
 COOPERATIVE COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD, conference symposium, X, 121
 Cooperative farming, X, 20
Cooperative Living, XI, 133
 "Corruption Runs Far Deeper than Politics," Marshall B. Clinard, X, 137
 COURT CASES REGARDING SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION, XI, 146
 CRISIS IN SCHOOL-COMMUNITY POLICY, XI, 143
- Decentralization, X, 14, 15, 32, 54, 139
 Delinquency, prevention of (rev.), X, 143
- Education for community, X, 23 (rev.), 56 (rev.); XI, 117, 141-72
 adult education, X, 94; XI, 136
 in community school, X, 38-43; XI, 141-42 ff., 177, 178

- in Danish folk schools, X, 126
 rural universities and, X, 55
 school consolidation and, X, 36, 38, 80, 131;
 XI, 117, 154, 161, 169
Education in Rural Communities, Natl. Society
 for the Study of Education, XI, 117
Education in the Humane Community, Jos. K.
 Hart, X, 37
 ENGLISH INDUSTRY "TRANSFORMS" INTO A
 COMMUNITY OF WORK, AN, X, 110
 Eskimo communities, X, 3
 EUREKA TAKES ON SEWAGE PROBLEM, X 10
 EXPERIMENT IN INFORMAL COMMUNITY OR-
 GANIZATION, AN, Dan R. Davis, X, 16
 Experimental communities, X, 2, 20, 32,
 39-43, 44, 48, 79, 96, 121-25; XI, 133,
 138
 FACTORY IN THE CORN FIELD, X, 15
Farm Journal, The, XI, 131
 FARMING BY THE GOLDEN RULE, Arthur E.
 Morgan, X, 20
 Fellowship groups, X, 48; XI, 122, 123, 126,
 168
 Fellowship of Intentional Communities,
 XI, 140
 FELLOWSHIPS MAY GROW INTO COMMUNITIES,
 XI, 123
 Folk schools, X, 126
Foreign Agriculture, X, 45
 FREEDOM AND MOVEMENT—NECESSITY FOR
 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING, X, 65
 FREEDOM AND THE SURVIVAL OF EXCELLENCE,
 X, 86
 FREEDOM IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, con-
 ference discussion, X, 119
 FREEDOM IN THE SMALL COMMUNITY, X, 67
Friends Bulletin, X, 40-41
Friends of the School News, XI, 174

Gandhi as a Social Revolutionary, Wilfred
 Wellock, X, 85
Genetics and the Origin of Species, Theodosius
 Dobzhansky, X, 86
 GEOGRAPHICAL ROOTS FOR CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP,
 Edwin L. Becker, XI, 132
 GOOD NEIGHBOR ACTS COMMON IN CENTRAL
 ILLINOIS, X, 11

 Handicrafts, X, 62
 HARMONY IN INTIMATE COMMUNITY RELA-
 TIONS, X, 79
 Health, X, 27, 61
Historic Faith and a Changing World, The,
 W. Norman Pettinger, X, 72
 HOW BASIC EDUCATION DEVELOPS THE HABITS
 OF FREEDOM AND INTEGRITY, Ashadevi
 Aryanayakam, X, 120
 HOW TO ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY COUNCIL,
 X, 102
 HUMAN EROSION, X, 11
Human Fertility: The Modern Dilemma,
 Robert C. Cook, X, 140

 Income, distribution of, X, 26
 INDIAN SOCIALISTS TURN TO GANDHI, X, 54
 INDUSTRIES FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES, Arthur
 E. Morgan, XI, 1-108
 INFORMAL PRIMARY GROUPS IN COMMUNITY
 ORGANIZATION, Walter L. Stone, XI, 126
 Inquiry, spirit of, X, 69
 Intelligence, urban, X, 140
 Intentional (cooperative) communities
 See: Experimental communities
 IS URBAN INTELLIGENCE DECLINING? X, 140

Journal of Education, X, 135
Journal of Heredity, X, 140

Law and Social Action: Selected Essays of
Alexander Pekelis, X, 74
 Leadership, X, 18, 28, 61; XI, 135
 LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM THE PAPAGOS
 INDIANS, A, X, 93
 Letters from readers, X, 34, 62, 128, 130;
 XI, 110, 171, 174
 LIST OF INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES, X, 124
 Local government, X, 10-11, 12, 53
 Logan, Ohio, *Daily News*, XI, 146

Manas magazine, XI, 188
 McLEAN: BELLWETHER OF FIRE DISTRICTS,
 X, 10
 Meetings and conferences, X, 32, 63, 95;
 XI, 139
Mennonite Community, The, X, 63
Modern Rural School, The, Butterworth and
 Dawson, XI, 117, 161-62

Natl. Education Assn. Journal, XI, 158
Natl. Herald, Lucknow, X, 55
 NEW COMMUNITY, THE—Extracts from *The*
Fellowship of the Picture, X, 48
New South magazine, X, 31
New Statesman and Nation, X, 54
New York Times Magazine, X, 137
 NEWSPAPER AS COMMUNITY PROJECT, THE,
 from *Journal of Education*, X, 135
 Newspapers in the community, X, 4-14, 19,
 28, 135
 NONCONFORMIST IN THE SMALL COMMUNITY,
 THE, X, 68
North Central Assn. Quarterly, The, XI, 149

 OUR TEACHABLE CULTURE, John W. Way, Jr.,
 X, 40

 PACIFIC ACKWORTH BUILDS, Alice Way, X, 41
 Panchiat, in India, X, 53
 Parliamentary procedure, X, 99
 PHYSICIAN AND COMMUNITY, XI, 179
Planning One Town, John D. Black and
 Ayers Brinser, XI, 166
 "Point Four" program, XI, 115
 Political corruption, X, 137
 Political parties, community and, X, 99, 137

- Population, X, 140
 movement of, X, 61
Preface to Eugenics, Frederick Osborn, X, 143
 PROBLEM OF FREEDOM, THE, conference discussion, X, 112-15
 PROBLEMS OF COOPERATIVE LIVING, conference discussion, X, 123
 PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, J. H. Hull, XI, 153
 RECREATING VILLAGE AUTONOMY IN INDIA, M. Sivaram, X, 53
 Recreation, X, 9, 30; XI, 136
 Regional planning, X, 13
 Religion in the community, X, 48, 94; XI, 131
Reporter, The, X, 138
Research Reports, Adult Ed. Assn., X, 94
 "Roberts' Rules of Order," X, 99, 130; XI, 110
 ROOT CAUSES OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION, X, 137
Rotarian magazine, X, 4
Rural Education News, XI, 175
 Rural fire districts, X, 9, 10
 Rural health, X, 27; XI, 179
Rural Missions, X, 45
 Rural schools, XI, 146, 158, 161, 171
Rural Schools for Tomorrow, N.E.A. Year-book, X, 134
Rural Sociology, X, 61, 132
Saturday Evening Post, X, 26
School and Society, XI, 161
 School-community relations, XI, 143
 School consolidation, X, 36-7, 131; XI, 146, 161, 166-167, 174
 SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION—A PROCESS CALLING FOR SOCIAL AS WELL AS EDUCATIONAL INSIGHT, XI, 117
 SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION POLICY IN MASSACHUSETTS, XI, 166
School Executive, The, XI, 153
 SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY, THE, Howard Y. McClusky, XI, 149
Schools for a New World, Am. Assn. of School Administrators, XI, 145
Schools in Small Communities, XI, 162
 SCIENCE AND THE COMMUNITY, X, 35
Scientific American, X, 37
 SMALL COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL REORGANIZATION, THE, X, 131
 Small industries, X, 4-11, 34, 110, 115, 139; XI, 1-108
 SMALL TOWNS MUST MEET NEW TESTS, X, 10
 Social evolution, X, 86
 SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL FREEDOM, Robt. A. Nisbet, X, 74
 Socialism, X, 54
Sociological Review, XI, 122
 Sociology of the community, X, 3, 23, 144
Statesman, The, Delhi, X, 53
 SUBURB VS. COMMUNITY, X, 138
 TATE, H. CLAY, AND THE PANTAGRAPH: HOW A NEWSPAPER BUILDS COMMUNITY, TECHNOLOGY FOR SMALL COMMUNITY SERVICES, Frank W. Cyr, XI, 177
 X, 4-14
Teho, Finnish magazine, X, 55
 TEN COMMUNITIES USE ONE POOL, X, 9
Transactions, Am. Soc. of Civil Engrs., X, 32
 TWELVE POINTS OF SELF-HELP, Arthur F. Raper, X, 45
 VALIDITY OF THE BASIC ARGUMENTS FOR CONSOLIDATION, T. A. Gantz, XI, 154
 Values, X, 3, 38, 48, 56
 evolution of, X, 86
 VILLAGE AND CITY—ROOT AND FRUIT, XI, 175
 WHAT CAUSES COMMUNITY? Arthur E. Morgan, XI, 111
 WHAT IS A GOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL LIKE? XI, 158
 "What Is Vital in Science," A. Keith Smiley, Jr., in *The Friend*, X, 37
 WHY BE CONCERNED ABOUT COMMUNITY? Arthur E. Morgan, X, 82
Your School District, Natl. Cmsn. on School Dist. Reorganization, X, 131
 Youth, X, 49

It is not the great engineer, nor the architect of political systems, nor even the sagacious statesman, who is the benefactor of mankind, these days—not these, but the simple individual who thinks for himself, who recognizes that the worth of a human life is what the man who lives it makes of it. . . .

If we have imagined that the specialists of our society, in either religion or science, are more important sources of knowledge than our own, unprejudiced reflections—then, surely, we have shut the world of knowledge out from ourselves, and are bound to feel friendless and lost when our authorities topple and give way.

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